

Appt. No. 10/052,094
Amdt. Dated 11/03/2004
Reply to Office action of 10/21/2004

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Listing of Claims

Claims 1-9 (cancelled)

Claim 10 (currently amended) The communication system of claim 8 16 further comprising:

a second virtual pipe between one of the second devices and said secure hub, and wherein said means for associating associates a second IP address from the pool of available IP addresses with the second virtual pipe, and wherein said means for tunneling tunnels the communications from the one of the second devices through the second virtual pipe.

Claims 11-15 (cancelled)

Claim 16 (new) A communication system comprising

a local network having a first communication device thereon,

a plurality of second communication devices external to said local network, said local network including access blocking apparatus that connects the local network to external networks and that separates said first and second communication devices,

a secure hub,

a virtual pipe between the first communication device and said secure hub, and

wherein said secure hub includes a pool of available IP addresses from which an IP address can be assigned to the first communication device and further comprises

means for associating the assigned IP address with the virtual pipe, whereby the IP address gives the first communication device an appearance on the local network,

means for routing communications from any of the second communication devices and addressed to the first communication device to the virtual pipe, and

means for tunneling said communications over the virtual pipe to the first communication device thereby bypassing the access blocking apparatus.

Claim 17 (new) A communication system comprising:

a local network having a first communication device thereon,

a plurality of second communication devices that are external to the local network and connectable thereto through a public network,

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security access blocking apparatus that provides the first communication device access to the public network and separates the first and second communication devices,

a secure hub having routing and switching functionality, pipe termination functionality, and interfaces to the public network, and

means for creating a virtual pipe between said secure hub and said first communication device for tunneling communication and bypassing said security access blocking apparatus, and wherein

said secure hub further includes means for assigning an IP address to said first communication device and associating said IP address with said virtual pipe, whereby said IP address gives said first communication device an appearance on said local network.